



Eventually, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, something that was to be called “neo-conservatism” came into being as a new category of political identity for persons like myself. . . . For me, “neo-conservatism” was an experience of moral, intellectual, and spiritual liberation. . . . What is wrong with liberalism is liberalism—a metaphysics and a mythology that is woefully blind to human and political reality. . . . It is an ethos that aims simultaneously at political and social collectivism on the one hand, and moral anarchy on the other. It cannot win, but it can make us all losers.

— Irving Kristol

Biography

Irving Kristol, one of the great essayists, editors, and public intellectuals of the twentieth century, was at the center of a transformative force in American politics and thought: neoconservatism.

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Introduction

Irving Kristol was one of the most influential writers, editors, and political commentators of the last half of the twentieth century. His obituaries credited him “with helping to transform the political landscape of the United States in the late 20th century” (*The Telegraph of London*) and “defin[ing] modern conservatism and . . . setting the stage for the Reagan presidency” (*The New York Times*).

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